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Amendment and/or Response  
Reply to Office action of 9/02/2004

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**Listing of the Claims**

A listing of the entire set of pending claims (including amendments to the claims, if any) is submitted herewith per 37 CFR 1.121. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) An object-based encoding system for encoding a video image, comprising:

a foreground encoding system for coding a foreground shape in a foreground video object plane;

a padding system that pads a masked area in a background video object plane, wherein the masked area is determined from data associated with the foreground shape; and

a background encoding system for coding the background video object plane.

2. (Original) The object-based encoding system of claim 1, wherein the foreground encoding system utilizes a shape-based encoding scheme.

3. (Original) The object-based encoding system of claim 1, wherein the background encoding system utilizes a frame-based encoding scheme.

4. (Original) The object-based encoding system of claim 1, wherein the masked area is padded with zeros when the video image comprises a P or B frame.

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5. (Original) The object-based encoding system of claim 1, wherein the masked area is padded with an average pixel value of the masked area when the video image comprises an I frame.
6. (Original) The object-based encoding system of claim 1, wherein the object based coding system comprises an MPEG-4 encoder.
7. (Currently Amended) A method of encoding a video image in an object-based encoding system, comprising:
- coding a foreground shape in a foreground video object plane;
  - padding a masked area in a background video object plane, wherein the masked area is determined from data associated with the foreground shape; and
  - coding the background video object plane.
8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the foreground shape is encoded with a shape-based encoding scheme.
9. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the background shape is encoded utilizing a frame-based encoding scheme.
10. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the masked area is padded with zeros when the video image comprises a P or B frame.

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11. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the masked area is padded with an average pixel value of the masked area when the video image comprises an I frame.
12. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the object based coding system comprises an MPEG-4 encoder.
13. (Currently Amended) A program product stored on a recordable medium for encoding a video image in an object-based encoding system, comprising:
- means for coding a foreground shape in a foreground video object plane;
  - means for padding a masked area in a background video object plane, wherein the masked area is determined from data associated with the foreground shape; and
  - means for coding the background video object plane.
14. (Original) The program product of claim 13, wherein the foreground shape is encoded with a shape-based encoding scheme.
15. (Original) The program product of claim 13, wherein the background shape is encoded utilizing a frame-based encoding scheme.
16. (Original) The program product of claim 13, wherein the masked area is padded with zeros when the video image comprises a P or B frame.

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17. (Original) The program product of claim 13, wherein the masked area is padded with an average pixel value of the masked area when the video image comprises an I frame.

18. (Original) The program product of claim 13, wherein the object based coding system comprises an MPEG-4 encoder.

19. (Currently Amended) The program product of claim 13, wherein the background object plane is texture coded.

20. (Currently Amended) The program product of claim 13, wherein the background object plane is shape coded.